



# Monaghan Model School



## School Position on Bullying

Last Updated November 2022

The Model school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s) and therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the pupil(s) doing the bullying.

The school community seeks to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a 'Reform, not Blame' approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report. Pupils will be taught to **Recognise**, **Reject** and **Report** incidents of bullying behavior.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

## Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Monaghan Model School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behavior. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behavior:
  - A positive school culture and climate which –
    - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
    - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior in a non-threatening environment; and
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
  - Effective leadership;
  - A school-wide approach;
  - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
  - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that –
    - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying;
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
  - Supports for staff;
  - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behavior (including use of established intervention strategies); and

- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

***Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.***

The following types of behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behavior do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behavior. However a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging to an individual will be treated as a very serious matter. Pupil will be interviewed and the seriousness of the incident will be explained. Pupil will then be asked to sign a promise that this he/she will not do this again. Parents will be notified of this behaviour.

**In the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behavior.** Incidents of this nature will be formally recorded using the Stage 2 Report Form (**Appendix 2**)

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

**Appendix 1** gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

4. The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school will normally be the class teacher. In the case of the class teacher being the parent of a pupil involved in the bullying incident another teacher or principal will act as the relevant teacher.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and other activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
  - The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school .
  - The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. The SALT Programme, School Assemblies, Golden Book, Kindness Cards, Friends for Life and Wellbeing Activities
  - Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
  - Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
    - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework.
    - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
    - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.

- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year.
  - School wide delivery of lessons on cyber bullying and relational aggression from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Web wise Primary Teachers Resources and Show Racism the Red Card.
  - Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Garda cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying. Other providers like Zeeko may also be used occasionally to enhance teaching on the dangers of online bullying.
- Occasional Anti Bullying Focus weeks or competitions
- Regular use of resources from the 'Awareness Raising' strand of the Anti Bullying Campaign website, proactively explaining the nature, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
  - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
  - Pupils are made aware of the dangers and consequences of posting negative defamatory comments on **any** social media sites (including: instant messenger (im), whatsapp, twitter, xbox live, PS Plus. Fortnite, among us, tick tock, snap chat, viber, instagram, minecraft, facebook etc.)
  - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
  - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school. **(Appendix 4)**

The school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied by being directed to and made aware of presentations, resources and activities available to support this area. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the 'Relevant Teacher' (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:
  - The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
  - The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
  - Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. **(Appendix 3A)** In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s). **(Appendix 3B)** For pupils in 2<sup>nd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> classes no further action will be taken at this stage and pupil will be given a chance to reform and improve hi/her behaviour. Parents of Infants and 1<sup>st</sup> class pupils will be contacted with a view to home and school working together to encourage and support the child to improve his/her behaviour in these formative years..
  - The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish the pupil doing the bullying but instead talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be

the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. (**Appendix 3C**)
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake.' In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below). A formal report will be recorded at this stage (**Appendix 2**)
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.
- Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to compiling a Behaviour plan or other strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the Principal.
- Advice may be sought from HSE or Garda
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Bullied pupils:
  - Ending the bullying behaviour
  - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
  - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
  - After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
  - Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner,
  - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
  - Implementing a 'buddy system' in the school (*if applicable*),
- Bullying pupils:
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
  - Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
  - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),

- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.
- **Bullying by Adults**
- In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Monaghan Model School will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations'.
- In the case of **Teacher – Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.
- In the case of **Parent – Teacher** bullying, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.
- In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Child** bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.
- In the case of **Principal – Parent/ Child** bullying, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel by being readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association Committee. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Policy reviewed and revised in October 2022

Signed:  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date:

Signed:  
(Principal)

Date:

## **Appendix 1.**

***Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):***

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
  - Shouting and uncontrolled anger / Personal insults
  - Verbal abuse
  - Offensive language directed at an individual,
  - Continually shouting or dismissing others
  - Public verbal attacks/criticism
  - Domineering behaviour
  - Open aggression
  - Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
  - Treating in a dictatorial manner/ Ridicule
  - Persistent slugging
  - Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
  - Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual
  - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
  - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork
- **Interference with property, for example:**
  - Stealing/damaging books or equipment
  - Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
  - Demanding money with menaces
  - Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
  - Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining / Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
  - Condescending tone
  - Deliberately withholding significant information and resources
  - Writing of anonymous notes
  - Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments
  - Malicious tricks/derogatory joke,
  - Knowingly spreading rumours
  - Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new idea,
  - Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)
  - Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying,
  - Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence
  - Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person
- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**
  - Deliberately marginalising an individual
  - Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group
  - Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
  - Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do